

September 30, 2003

**ALERT!**  
**Preliminary GEPA**  
**Information**

To: Chief School Administrator  
Charter School Lead Person  
School Principal

From: Isaac Bryant, Assistant Commissioner  
Division of Student Services

Subject: Early Warning Status under the *No Child Left Behind* Accountability  
Requirements for Grade Eight Schools

Under the federal *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB), the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) must implement a single accountability system to identify schools moving toward meeting the goal of 100% proficiency by the year 2014. This is a preliminary status report for middle schools in the district using the new accountability standards and cycle II 2003 Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment data. The attached status report, *Early Warning Status Under No Child Left Behind Accountability Requirements: 2003* summarizes the indicators that were analyzed using preliminary 2003 assessment data to generate this notification. This status report specifically identifies the following:

- The total number of indicators met;
- Whether participation rates for the total population and for all student subgroups represented in your school were met;
- Whether adequate yearly progress benchmarks for the total school population and for student subgroups were met; and,
- Whether safe harbor was met for each relevant student subgroup that did not make the benchmark.

Please refer to the attached "Key Points" document that will assist in understanding the report. Additionally, the document *Understanding Accountability in New Jersey* is attached. It provides the step-by-step process that is used to calculate AYP for all schools in New Jersey.

The results of this analysis are preliminary; certain data are not included in this review. They are: the review of the secondary measure (school and student subgroup attendance rates), and the Alternate Proficiency Assessment results. Final status reports will be released in December 2003 that include these data, making the analysis complete.

This review analyzes both total student and student subgroup performance. If a subgroup of students does not achieve the adequate yearly progress benchmark, then a safe harbor calculation is made. Safe harbor is achieved if the proportion of students scoring partially proficient in 2002 is reduced by 10% in 2003.

If safe harbor was reached in your school for any student subgroup, the secondary measure which is attendance rate for that group must be included in the final analysis. The attached page from the New Jersey Accountability Workbook describes how to calculate this rate. Please list on the attached form the attendance rate for each student subgroup making safe harbor and send that information by **October 30, 2003** to:

New Jersey Department of Education  
Office of Title I Program Planning and Accountability  
PO Box 500  
Trenton, NJ 08625

***Without this information, the student subgroup cannot be considered as making safe harbor.***

You are encouraged to review your 2003 eighth grade assessment data to analyze this status report. The assessment data and the status report are considered public information and should be shared with your staff, board of education and constituents.

On **October 3, 2003**, the NJDOE will be issuing information to the media and to the general public about the NCLB accountability requirements for eighth grade schools. At that time, a list of the eighth grade schools in "early warning" status will be released. Although we are not required to release the list, we think the information about the schools identified will help us emphasize the unnecessary and unfortunate problems that much of the implementation of NCLB causes.

The federal AYP requirements and strict implementation timelines of NCLB are intricate. Despite these complexities, please view this process as a challenge to enhance the superior educational opportunities in our state. Your continued commitment to assure that all students in New Jersey meet high standards is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions or need further information about the NCLB single accountability requirements, please contact Linda Dold-Collins, director, Office of Title I Program Planning and Accountability at (609) 943-4283.

IB/LDC/so

Attachments

c: Members, State Board of Education  
William L. Librera  
Dwight Pfennig  
Gloria Hancock  
Senior Staff  
Jon Zlock  
Diane Schonyers  
County Superintendent